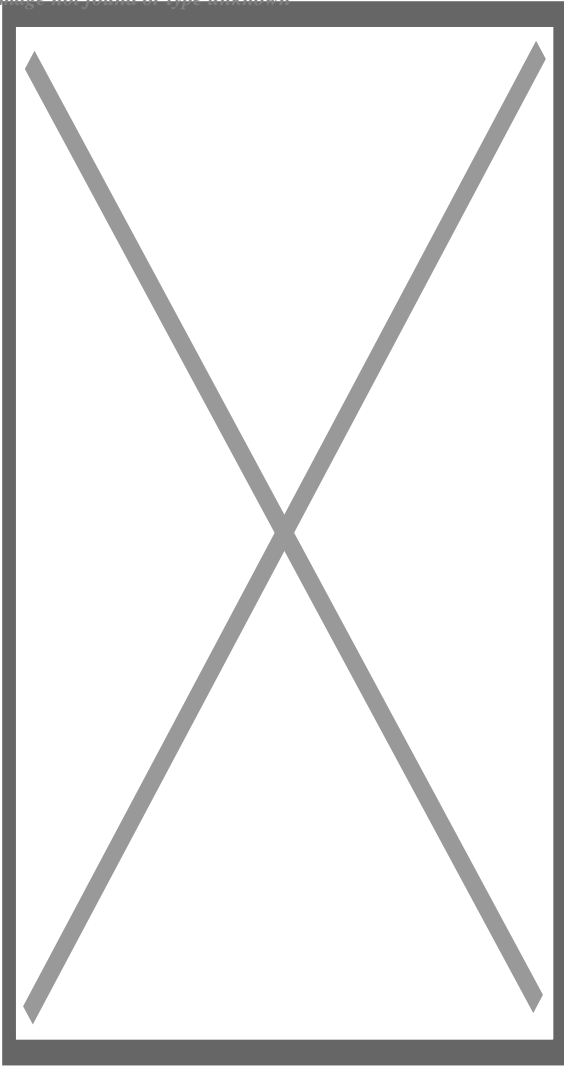


UN rights chief horrified by mass grave reports at Gaza hospitals

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Geneva, April 26 (RHC)-- The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk has been "horrified" by the discovery of mass graves at two hospitals in the besieged Gaza Strip.

Ravina Shamdasani, the spokesperson for the High Commissioner, said Turk had been horrified by the destruction of Nasser and Shifa medical facilities in the besieged Palestinian territory and the discovery of mass graves there.

"We feel the need to raise the alarm because clearly there have been multiple bodies discovered," said Turk, who was represented by Shamdassani at a UN press briefing. "Some of them had their hands tied, which of course indicates serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law, and these need to be subjected to further investigations."

She said the UN human rights office was working on corroborating Palestinian officials' reports that 283 bodies were found at Nasser and 30 at Shifa Hospital. Last week, the discovery of a mass grave at Nasser hospital drew global condemnations.

Gaza's Civil Emergency Service reports that a total of 310 bodies had been found at one mass grave at Nasser so far and that two other graves had been identified, but not yet excavated.

Bodies were also discovered at Shifa following an Israeli raid on the site. Reports say the bodies were buried beneath piles of waste and included women and the elderly.

The Palestinian resistance movement Hamas says Israel does not hesitate to commit such crimes against civilians in Gaza, with the U.S. administration providing the regime criminal cover. It says the US is a full partner in the Israeli genocide in the besieged territory.

Turk has also decried Israeli strikes on Gaza in recent days, which he said had killed mostly women and children. He also repeated a warning against a full-scale incursion on Rafah where some 1.2 million civilians are crowded together, saying this could lead to "further atrocity crimes."

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